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From the Author.

VINDICIAE MOSAICÆ.

A LETTER

TO

THE RIGHT REV. BISHOP COLENSO,

IN REPLY TO HIS ARGUMENTS AGAINST

THE VERACITY OF THE

PENTATEUCH.

BY

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LETTER, ETC.

RIGHT REVEREND SIR,

A LTHOUGH every thoughtful member of Christ's Church must feel a painful interest in your critical examination of the Pentateuch, nevertheless it is scarcely within the limits of propriety for any man who so pleases, to assume to himself the right of addressing you on the subject of your argument. If I, a stranger to you in person, though not in name, myself, have ventured on a course which might be considered presumptuous in many others to take, the extenuations which I plead are these:—Our career in life for some time ran nearly parallel; both of us gained very nearly the same academical distinctions; both of us have written books once more or less adopted by our University, and we both of us attained to the honour of a Fellowship in the same noble College. It is this last circumstance which, perhaps, has weighed with me more than any other; not so much in my determination to sift your arguments, as best I may, as in the adoption of the present form of communicating the result of the investigation. I have spoken of our College; for no loyal member of that ancient and religious foundation can forget how it trained, and still cherishes the memory of learned and good men, such as Henry Martyn, and Blunt, and Selwyn; men who have devoted or hazarded their lives in defending at home, or in preaching abroad to the

Trinity College Cambridge

heathen, that faith which, to our great amazement, you now teach as resting on no secure and historical basis. Not that I would arrogate to myself the office of defending the fair fame of the venerable society to which we belong; but I have set myself the task of exposing what I believe to be the fallacies of your book, partly from the impatience which all men feel while a stigma remains upon any object of their deep regard, and partly under the hope that I may incite some other men of greater ability to extend and complete the arguments which I have here briefly, and with intentional brevity, commenced.

Then there is another motive which has induced me to come forward. I greatly fear that, through an infirmity common to minds half informed, your book may still further encourage the belief or the suspicion that there is some necessary but ill-defined connection between mathematical or natural science and scepticism regarding the historical value of the Sacred Record. For it cannot be forgotten that Dr. Colenso is, or has been, a man of science, and it cannot be unknown that the Bishop of Natal teaches very large portions of the Pentateuch to be historically false. As one, therefore, who has passed much of his life in the pursuit of scientific learning of various descriptions, I wish, so far as in me lies, to vindicate the compatibility of scientific acquirements, with a devout but intelligent belief in the historical veracity of the Sacred Scriptures. You argue for the untruthfulness of the Pentateuch, though you adopt the euphemism of non-historical value, and the arguments, moreover, for the most part, are old and familiar to divines. I, on the other hand, undertake to show that your arguments are untenable, and that the narrative, in the very parts you object to, bears the stamp of truth. In so

doing, in thus freely scrutinising what you say, I trust I may never forget what you are. I shall do my best to take from you the cruse and the spear, but I may not stretch forth my hand against one who is the Lord's anointed. The servants of the Lord must not strive.

With the view, then, of being as brief as perspicuity will in any way admit, I shall pass over your preface, and the difficulties urged by your Zulu convert regarding slavery and the deluge, with the remark that it seems strange to me how any person who, like ourselves, must in early life have been very familiar with Butler's Analogy, could have been at a loss for the proper answer to the Kaffir's arguments, and to multitudes of others of a kindred nature. You must well know how it has been the great law of God's dealings with His creatures to permit the existence of many things in this His world, far sadder and far more inexplicable to us than slavery. And then you have overlooked how the Mosaic economy, notwithstanding its imperfections, was in enormous advance of the morality and the humanities or the inhumanities practised among all other contemporary nations. Nay, you might have told the Zulu how, in the far west of him, even in this day of Gospel light, many a slave would gladly exchange the laws of his bondage for the more merciful enactments of the Mosaic code.

I shall say nothing here regarding the very formidable difficulties in connection with the deluge; for, though you allude to some of them, the main course which you take is far more insidious, and far more fatal to the peace of cultivated minds, inasmuch as you impeach the general veracity of the Record, that so the particular testimony to the miracle may fall to the ground. Nevertheless, from repeated personal

observation, I feel quite sure that what strikes you as an unanswerable argument against the universality of the deluge, namely, the state of the volcanic cones in Auvergne,* is, in fact, very far from conclusive in the direction you intimate.

Without further preface, I now proceed to examine *seriatim* the difficulties which you say attach to the credibility of very many portions of the Pentateuch.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE FAMILY OF JUDAH.

THE first of “the remarkable contradictions” and “plain impossibilities” which you resuscitate as impugning the veracity of the Pentateuch refers to the births of Hezron and Hamul, whose equivocal relationship to Judah it is not easy to designate.

Judah, you say, was but 42 years old, “according to the story,” when he went down with Jacob into Egypt. You say also that the story declares *with him* there went Hezron and Hamul, who were the *grandsons* of Tamar his daughter-in-law. The impossibility that to a man whose age did not exceed 42 there should be born 2 great-grandsons, I admit; but that it is necessarily, or even naturally, to be inferred from the Sacred Record that these 2 great-grandsons were born to Judah, either in Canaan, or at the early age of 42, I respectfully but emphatically deny.

The whole question lies in a very small compass.

* These craters are not the mere dust-heaps described in page viii (Preface). They are either indurated by infiltration, or originally consisted of very hard materials. The true and formidable arguments against a submergence are derived from other considerations.

In the Pentateuch it is virtually said more than once, “All the sons of the house of Jacob who came into Egypt were threescore and ten.” Among these 70 persons, I admit, were Hezron and Hamul. The question then is, do the words “came into Egypt” necessarily imply that *all the 70 without exception* were born in Canaan, and from Canaan went down with Jacob into Egypt? If these 70 include any persons who the narrative itself plainly declares did not strictly *go down* into Egypt, but who were as plainly *born* in Egypt, then there can be no reason why they may not possibly include others also; and thus the words “came into Egypt” will be literally and strictly applicable to the *general body* of the migrating families alone.

Now, among these 70 persons of whom it is affirmed they “came into Egypt” are Manasseh and Ephraim, who undoubtedly were *born* in Egypt: no man quarrels with the term “came into Egypt” even as applied to them, although we know all along that in Egypt they were born. Why, then, should we be in difficulty as to the strict and logical applicability of the same terms to Hezron and Hamul, seeing that an obvious necessity precludes their birth in Canaan? I say that the sacred penman, by including Manasseh and Ephraim among the 70 who *went down* into Egypt, evidently used the terms in a broad and a general sense, conscious that he was narrating the truth, and anticipating no misconception of his words.

And here I might safely leave the matter, but that I find the Septuagint Version in this case, as in so many other cases, throws additional light upon the question, and strongly corroborates the view I have taken regarding the broad and general sense of the terms under discussion.

From page 26 (ii) of your work I think it may be inferred that you are somewhat uneasy for the fate of your argument, from the fact of its being stated in the *English Version* that Benjamin, at apparently about the age of 22, must (in your view of the case) have taken into Egypt *ten sons*. Certainly, this is a large and an unexpected tribe for the youth Benjamin to take down with him into Egypt, and there present them to Joseph his brother. You solve the difficulty by saying, “as he was above the age of 22, it is quite possible that he may have had 10 sons—perhaps by several wives!” To you, with your experience of polygamy in Africa, the supposition may be possible: to me it is incredible.

But the Septuagint Version affirms that of these 10 *sons* of Benjamin, prematurely born as you suppose them, 5 of them were *grandsons*, and one of them a *great-grandson*; and this genealogical relation is fully confirmed in other portions of the Sacred Record. But, would any man infer from the whole narrative in Genesis that Benjamin “*went down into Egypt*” with this numerous and remote posterity? I think he would, in their case, construe in a very large sense the words “*went down into Egypt*.”

The words of the Septuagint, and they are quoted by St. Stephen (*Acts* vii. 14), are as follows: πᾶσαι ψυχαὶ οἴκου Ἰακὼβ αἱ εἰσελθόνσαι μετὰ Ἰακὼβ εἰς Αἴγυπτον ψυχαὶ ἐβδομήκοντα πέντε. “All the souls of the house of Jacob who went down with Jacob into Egypt are 75.”

Now, together with 32 descendants of Leah, 16 of Zilpah, and 7 of Bilhah; these 75 persons include 2 sons, 3 grandsons, and 2 great-grandsons, of Joseph (LXX, Gen. xlvi.), besides the 5 grandsons and the great-grandson of Benjamin referred to above. Surely,

then, the words “went down into Egypt” are to be taken in a very broad and very general sense.

But I must go further still. St. Stephen, in his quotation of this passage from the Septuagint, uses the term “μετακαλέσατο,” saying that Joseph “called,” or rather “invited,” these 75 persons into Egypt; that is to say, if the word “invited” here is to be taken in the narrow and strictly logical sense in which you would confine the words “came with Jacob into Egypt,” then we shall have St. Stephen affirming that Joseph invited *himself*, to say nothing of a similar invitation to his 3 grandsons and 2 great-grandsons, *who as yet were unborn*. Surely, then, enough, and more than enough, has been said to show that we are by no means necessarily or naturally led to infer from the words of the Sacred Record that Judah at the age of 42 went down into Egypt with two great-grandsons at his side. To me the marvel is how any intelligent and candid person could have conjured up so unreal a difficulty.

The origin of your misunderstanding in this matter, and in many other matters, arises, I think, from your attributing a geometrically exact and cautious use of language, which none but a lawyer providing against every possible misconception of his words, could be expected to adopt. I, for one, am thankful that this is by no means the mode in which words are used in the Sacred Writings. God therein treats us as sincere men, and not as captious logicians.

I will only add, as a remarkable confirmation of the interpretation which I have above derived from Scripture itself, of the Scriptural language “came down into Egypt,” that in the Septuagint, there is attached (Gen. xlvi. 20.) the word “ἐγένοντο” to the 2 sons, the 3 grandsons, and the 2 great-grandsons of Joseph; none of whom, logically speaking, *could* have come down

into Egypt. The same word ἐγένοντο is also attached to the 5 grandsons and 2 great-grandsons of Benjamin. And most observable it is, for our present argument, this word ἐγένοντο is applied to Hezron and Hamul, and its equivalent also is found in the Hebrew. *Besides the above persons it is found attached to no other names.* How could you have overlooked all these considerations, while charging the Sacred Record with folly?

CHAPTER II.

THE NUMBER OF THE PRIESTS AT THE EXODUS COMPARED WITH THEIR DUTIES AND WITH THE PROVISION MADE FOR THEM.

THE onerous nature, and the minute technicality of the Jewish Ritual, and of other religious observances connected therewith, are commonly urged as a proof of their divine origin, or at least of the belief in their divine origin, on the part of the people who were enjoined to observe them. You cut away the ground from beneath this argument if you can show, as you assert you can, that this ritual and these observances could not have been established and practised at the time and in the manner recorded in the Pentateuch. Writing of the multifarious duties of the priests, you say, “for all the burnt-offerings, meat-offerings, peace-offerings, sin-offerings, trespass-offerings, thank-offerings, of a population like that of (*the city of, sic*) London, besides the daily and extraordinary sacrifices, how many priests were there? The answer is very simple. There were only *three.*” (art. 147.) You add,

with your usual minuteness of calculation, “even the offerings for women after childbirth would occupy 42 hours daily.”

I admit the correctness of the quotations whereby you establish the burdensome and multifarious nature of the ritual to be observed, and I admit that there may have been but 3 priests during the earlier portions of the sojourn in the wilderness. But I distinctly and emphatically deny that there were not abundant means fully adequate to the discharge of the duties enjoined. I will give my reasons shortly.

But further still, in your sixth chapter, you draw a picture, the original of which you say is to be found in *Lev.* iv, of one of these 3 sorely-tasked priests, carrying “*on his back on foot*,” as it were from St. Paul’s to beyond Highgate, the entire carcase of a bullock, with his skin, head, and dung. The very words labour, and the picture is amazing. But you say, “it is our duty to look plain facts in the face,” and that is precisely what I propose to do, and thus looking, if I mistake not, this astounding picture will vanish into thin air.

This picture of impossible portage, for any one man not of the sons of Anak, you however somewhat relieve by representing the Sacred Record (you term it, “the story”) as ordering him to be supplied with an equivalent, but equally impossible amount of food. To omit the wave-breasts and the heave-shoulders, you say, “each priest would have had to eat 88 pigeons daily for his own portion” (p. 156); and then you add, “what an enormous provision!!” Enormous indeed, but not more than sufficient to supply the power for the portage of the bullock by one man “*on his back and on foot*.” I am sure you believe the Sacred Record states all this, otherwise you would not have

inserted the matter in your book. I admit also the correctness of all your quotations. I admit the words, “Even the whole bullock shall he (the priest) carry forth without the camp.” (*Lev.* iv.) I admit the words, and many others like them, “everything devoted in Israel shall be *thine* (the priest’s); the wave-breast and the heave-shoulder, I have given unto Aaron the priest, and unto his sons by a statute for ever.” (*Lev.* vii.) But I will presently show that the burden was none too excessive, nor the food more than adequate for those who had to carry it. But before I do so, pardon me if I express my surprise that you did not yourself see your way out of this maze, and search the Scriptures for the clue. Pardon me again for saying that had you relied, as you had a right to rely, on your own mental powers and common sense, instead of looking abroad into the books of commentators, I am quite satisfied you would yourself have found the solution of the difficulty which oppresses you. Even if there were no other passage in the Pentateuch than the following (and there are hundreds like it), it alone, I should have thought, is sufficient to explain the matter; the words I allude to embrace the portion of a command given from the Source of all command to Moses (*Ex.* xxviii. 40), “And for Aaron’s sons thou shalt make (*ποιήσεις*, LXX.) coats . . and thou shalt put them upon Aaron (*ἐνδύσεις*), and thou shalt make them (*ποιήσεις*, LXX.) linen breeches!” Surely there is but one interpretation to be put upon this passage; and had Michael Angelo interpreted it as you have interpreted many other passages to the naked letter, assuredly it must have marred for ever the majestic image conceived within his mind of the Hebrew Legislator. The chisel of the great Florentine must have dropped powerless in the sculpture of that mighty

brow. But whether the Scriptures in so many words declare or not that Moses was *personally* engaged in so unnecessary and inglorious an occupation, I am quite sure that the Sacred Record does *not* represent either Aaron as carrying the ox, or his sons as eating a wave-breast and 88 pigeons* per day. For thus I read, *Numbers* iii. 6, “Bring the tribe of Levi near and present them before Aaron the priest, THAT THEY MAY MINISTER UNTO HIM, and they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle.” *Numbers* viii. 19, “I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and his sons, to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation, and to make an atonement for the children of Israel.” And, v. 24, “This is it that belongeth unto the Levites; from twenty-and-five years old and upward *they shall go in to wait upon the service of the tabernacle of the congregation* and from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service thereof.” And again, *Numbers* iv. 16, “To the office of Eleazar pertaineth the OVERSIGHT (*ἐπιστολὴ*) of all the tabernacle.” And lastly, *Deut.* xviii. 1, “The priests the Levites, and ALL THE TRIBE OF LEVI SHALL EAT THE OFFERINGS OF THE LORD MADE BY FIRE AND HIS INHERITANCE.”

How could you have overlooked these passages? I need not say another word.

* Inasmuch as the solemn and important rite of Circumcision was omitted in the desert (*Joshua* v. 5), are we not thereby led to conclude that other rites also, of lesser moment, were not observed: *e. g.* the offerings for the purification of women, &c.? God does not gather where He does not straw.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE NUMBER OF THE ADULTS AND THE NUMBER OF
THE LEVITES AT THE TIME OF THE FIRST CENSUS.

I COME now to the consideration of an old difficulty, regarding the numbers assigned in the Sacred Record to the tribes of Israel at the time of the Exodus. The only novelty therein is the apparently precise and arithmetical mode in which you deal with the question.

First of all, and before proceeding to examine your arithmetic, let us look at the result of your calculation. You say that, cotemporary with the generation of Moses and Aaron, there would be 1094 males (art. 118). If your calculation be correct, then beyond all doubt the prophecy regarding the number of Jacob's posterity in Egypt must either be unfulfilled or a sheer fabrication ; and, moreover, the whole first chapter of Exodus must be (I hesitate to use the terms) not only a wilful and most gross, but a most clumsy imposition. For in *Gen. xlvi. 3*, I read, “And God spake unto Israel, . . . fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will *there* make of thee *a great nation*.” If there were in reality only 1094 males, this would scarcely constitute a great nation ; the 600,000 adult males of the narrative certainly fulfil the Divine promise.

But still more to the purpose, *Exodus i. 7*, runs thus, “And the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, and multiplied and waxed exceeding mighty, *and the land was filled with them*.” Now you will observe this is spoken of the Israelites before their maltreatment by the Egyptian government commenced, and therefore before the

birth of Moses and Aaron, and a century before the Exodus.

Was *the land filled* with 1094 males? But the Sacred Record proceeds yet further: “Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph; and he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more* and mightier than we.”

Surely such language can in no degree apply to 1094 males; they could neither “fill the land” nor excite a terror, still less could they be “mightier” than the host of Egypt. Either, therefore, your arithmetic is very greatly at fault, or the Record is, as I have said, not only a manifest but a most clumsy fabrication. I hope shortly to show that the error lies in your arithmetic. You will observe that I am arguing here, that if your number, 1094, is correct, then the clumsiness of the fabrication of the story is too transparent for credence; but that the Sacred Record with regard to its numbers is, at least, apparently consistent with itself.

Let us, then, inquire what is the arithmetical process by which you arrive at so curious, so unexpected a result. You multiply 51 by 27, and, on finding the result to be 1377 instead of 600,000, you declare the Record in which we and our forefathers, and apostles, and prophets before them have put our trust, is “unhistorical,” *i. e.* in plain language, false.

The grounds on which you have assumed these two factors, 51 and 27, are these: first, you find there were 51 sons of the patriarchs in Egypt (LXX affirms a smaller number, viz. 39); secondly, you say there were *three* generations from Kohath to Moses; and, thirdly, assuming each male to have a family containing on the average 3 sons, you arrive in this way at the

* (LXX μέγαλα.)

second factor 27. Now, without for one moment admitting that this is a correct method of ascertaining the number of the Israelitish (or of any other) population, I protest against the factor 27; that is, I protest against the number which you assign to the generations or successions from Kohath to the Exodus.

When Kohath came with Levi his father into Egypt I know not precisely his age. Judah had a son living and two grandsons before he went thither, and I may, therefore, fairly assume Levi's son Kohath to be at that time about 20 years old. Now, the Israelites were in Egypt 215 years, and, assuming that each male had a son at the age of 25, a possible, nay, a not improbable hypothesis, it will follow that there may have been *eight* successions from father to son, from the time of Kohath's entrance into Egypt until the Exodus, and yet leave some sons of 35 years of age, at the time of their quitting Egypt for the desert. Among others, Joshua for instance.

That this hypothesis is not inconsistent with the records and the facts of the case appears from this: Joseph "saw Ephraim's children of the third generation." Now Ephraim was born not earlier than when Joseph was 33. Joseph died at 110 years of age, leaving an interval of 77 years, which 77 divided by 3 gives for a succession or a generation, about 25 years. I also arrive at the same result from the recorded fact that Aaron, born about 83 years before the Exodus, married Elisheba of the tribe of Judah, in the fifth generation after Judah's son.* Joshua also, according to the record in Chronicles, was born in the 8th generation after that of Kohath or Ephraim. This being the case, and fortified in the truth thereof

* See the Genealogical Tables at the end of the Pamphlet.

not only by possibility, but by what is thus actually recorded, I proceed to apply your own mode of calculation, and accordingly I find the number of males of all ages at the period of the Exodus to be somewhere about $51 \times 3 = 334,611$, and about the half of these, viz. about 150,000, may be considered above 20 years of age.

This is a very respectable number, and certainly very different from 1377: and very different from even 4923, which in another place (art. 118) you seem not indisposed to accept as a possible number.

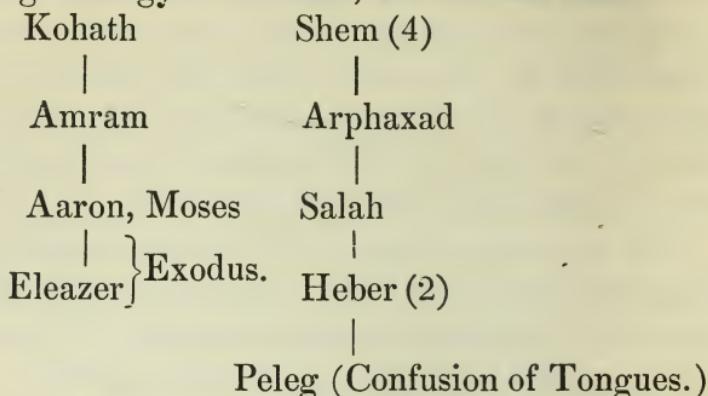
The whole difference between our two principles of calculation is that you allow but *three* successions from the sons of Jacob to the Exodus* and I feel myself compelled in all fairness to take *eight*.

In taking but 3 successions from Kohath to the Exodus you assume that *on the average* a male became a father not earlier than at the age of $\frac{215}{3} = 72$ years! I have adopted 25 years for a succession of descent, and if reasons were needed, reasons have been given.

* It may be that in this matter you rely on the words, "in the fourth generation they shall come hither." (*Gen. xv. 16.*) In the fourth generation they did go out; *i.e.* the men of the fourth generation were not all dead, Moses and Aaron for instance. But then, at a time when men lived to the ages of 110 and 130 years, it was very possible for some men of the fourth generation to be contemporary with others of the eighth; Moses and Aaron with Joshua for instance. Moreover, it must never be forgotten that the family successions from Kohath to Moses were very abnormal, occupying 155 from grandfather to the birth of the grandson. Was it *designed* that Moses, who was to be the leader of his people, might thereby have conversed with his grandfather Kohath, who himself heard from Jacob the family traditions of Canaan?

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The plan upon which you proceed is this: you take the genealogy of Kohath; and it runs thus:—



Apparently here are but 3 generations or successions, and then, assuming 3 males to a family, you arrive at your astounding result.

In order to test the correctness of your process, I will, as mathematicians are wont to do, on precisely the same principles, endeavour to calculate the number of the male population who were dispersed at the Confusion of Tongues. I have had some experience in calculation, having in vindication of the Scripture account of the star of the Magi, calculated an ephemeris of sun and planets for b.c. 66, and for other remote periods; but I confess this problem of the Babel population would be comparatively hopeless in its complexity, were it not for the ingenious process which you have devised. Now the genealogy of the descendants of Shem, until the building of Babel, I have given above, side by side with that of Kohath.

Shem had 4 sons, Heber had 2, the mean is 3. Hence, after your mode of calculation, the number of descendants of Shem was $3 \times 3 \times 3 \times 3 = 81$.

And as the same may be said for each of the two other sons of Noah, viz. Japheth and Ham, we arrive at the total number of the male population at the period of the dispersion, when “the whole earth was of one

language and of one speech," viz. 343 ! And at the time of the flood, by adopting a similar process, I find 59,041 was the number of the male inhabitants ; which is about the population of a moderate-sized modern town. Results such as these must shake all confidence in the process you have adopted for calculating the numbers at the time of the Exodus, with the view of testing the veracity of the Sacred Record.

But a truce to such trifling. It is not in your power, nor in that of any man, to calculate even approximately what *must* have been the numbers of the Israelitish tribes at the Exodus :—nevertheless, seeing that there were 8 successive periods of 25 years each, from the entrance into Canaan to the Exodus, enough has been shown to render it probable that the children of the promise might have been, as the Sacred Record says they were, under any circumstances *very numerous*, and (as I am persuaded) 150,000 men above 20 years of age would probably fall far within the truth.

Still 150,000 is not 600,000, greatly as it exceeds your 1377, or even your 5000.

But in estimating the number of the Hebrew population in Egypt I cannot see how, consistently with reason, it is possible to omit *the descendants of the servants and the retainers of the several families* : into Egypt these retainers *must* have come with the flocks and herds and with the young children : "Take your father and *your households*, and come unto me," are the words of Joseph ; and again, "My father, and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have . . . are in the land of Goshen."

Surely the fathers would not send back the servants to perish by famine in the land from whence they had come out ; moreover, they could scarcely have exchanged them for Egyptian servants, seeing that

“every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians.” I hold it therefore illogical to omit the posterity of these men in the enumeration of the Hebrew population : of the *pure* stock of Abraham their posterity would not be, but numbered among the men *fit to bear arms* assuredly they would be : and I know not by what process they would not very considerably exceed in number the pure stock of Israel. Circumcised beyond all doubt they would be (*Ex. xii. 48, &c.*), and gradually, I presume, admitted into all but the most sacred rights (the rights of the first born, the rights of the Levite, and the service of the tabernacle for instance) appertaining to the children of the promise. Whether I wanted these men for the purpose of my argument or not, I feel that I should be doing violence to the truth of the case if I omitted to consider them. In this way, then, I see no difficulty in believing that the Sacred Record states nothing but the truth when, although the number of the adults of the *pure* male stock of Israel may not have exceeded 150,000, the total number of the adults of all sorts at the time of the Exodus is reckoned at 603,550.

Such are the results from what I conceive to be a more correct application of your own mode of reasoning. But I think we can go upon what would be generally considered a securer basis : let us consult the authority or the opinion of those who, by long-continued study of the phenomenon of population, are best able to give us the results of experience. We can have nothing more trustworthy than Malthus, endorsed by the author of “*Fasti Hellenici*.” I there find the following passage, Clinton, page 294, vol. iii :—“According to a table of Euler, the period of doubling a population will be only $12\frac{4}{5}$ years. And this proportion is not only a possible supposition, but

has actually occurred for short periods."—MALTHUS' *Essay*, vol. i. p. 8. This is certainly a very responsible body of authorities, Euler, Malthus, Clinton.

In the absence of all data to the contrary—nay, rather (as on calculation you will find), not in any great degree differing from your own hypothesis of 3 sons to a family—let us take the period of doubling a population on the moderate hypothesis of 15 years. As we are greatly in the dark regarding the precise ages of the children of the patriarchs when they arrived in Egypt, I will suppose, as an average or mean, that about 10 years elapsed before families were born to them; in this way we shall have 13 successions of 15 years each for the doubling of the population, in accord with Malthus. The number of the sons of the patriarchs, excepting the tribe of Levi, is 39;* also, 2 multiplied by itself 13 times is 8192, and 39 times 8192 is 319,488. This, then, according to Malthus, is a not improbable number of *male* population to expect in the course of 215 years in a new nation, before the Darwinian principle of the struggle for existence has come into strong operation. This gives us about 160,000 males above the age of 20, and is pretty much the same approximate result as I have obtained from the correction of your own process. The remainder, as before, I claim as the descendants of the retainers, who of necessity came down into Egypt with their masters. On these principles (which I trust I have clearly enunciated), to me there appears nothing incredible, but, on the contrary, much that is extremely probable, in the truth of the

* Judah 1, Issachar 4, Zebulun 3, Gad 7, Asher 4, Joseph 2, Benjamin 3, Dan 1, Naphtali 4, Reuben 4, Simeon 6; total, 39. I have before given reasons for taking Judah's children as 1 and Benjamin's as 3, and my starting-point is children, not grandchildren, of the patriarchs.

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number, 600,000, assigned by the Sacred Record to the whole adult male population at the time of the Exodus.

Let us now consider in the same way the number of the tribe of Levi.

According to the Malthusian principle adopted in the last case, the antecedently not improbable number of males accruing from Levi's three sons would be $3 \times 2^{13} = 24,576$ at the time of the Exodus. The Sacred Narrative assigns 22,000. A greater degree of accord could not be expected. I affirm, then, that, from the experience of the closest observers of the increase of new populations, you have no good ground for calling in question the numbers of the tribe of Levi as recorded in the Sacred Volume.

That the Kohathites should be somewhat more numerous than the Gershonites, or the Merarites, is explicable from the fact of Kohath starting with 3 or 4 sons, while his brothers had but 2; *i.e.* supposing the genealogical tables are given to us fully and *in extenso*, which I, with many others, greatly doubt, and which neither you nor any man can prove. Your calculation of the number of Kohathites at the first census is 20!! (page 108, iii.) According to Euler and Malthus I make their numbers to exceed 7000. The number in the Sacred Record is 8600. (*Num.* iii. 28.)

Now in this comparatively small number of the Levites, the most honoured, be it remembered, of all the tribes, I think I see a very beautiful touch of truth. Judah with but one son* Shelah, recorded in the genealogical tables, numbers 74,600 adult males at the first census; Dan, with but one son recorded, numbers 62,700; whereas Levi, notwithstanding his three sons, numbers but about 22,000

* Er and Onan died in Canaan, though Er had a posterity.

males of all ages ! But then we must remember that we have in Levi, at any rate, a tribe subjected to a species of cupellation ; the sons of the strangers, the Lacedæmonians, the Metœci, are all filtered out here, if anywhere ; and then the *pure stock of Levi*, calculated on the principles of human experience, comes out in good accord with the assertions in the Sacred Record. Surely we have herein not an incredible “story,” but much “consistency without contrivance.”

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE NUMBER OF THE FIRST-BORN AT THE TIME OF THE EXODUS.

THE number of the first-born males, as given in Exodus, is 22,000. Undoubtedly this is a very small number when compared with a *total* population of probably one million males ; and it must be admitted that at the first sight there is a very glaring discrepancy. But surely this discrepancy is so great that it could hardly have failed to present itself to the mind of a forger, and thus would have been as surely avoided. To me the Sacred Narrative herein rather bears the stamp of one telling the truth of the thing as he knew it to be, heedless of what consequences might follow from his brief and unsuspecting narrative of the naked fact.

But can we see any sort of clue to the unravelling of this tangled thread ? I think we can.

In the preceding chapter I remarked that it would be natural to expect that the posterity of the Hebrew retainers would be excluded from the more sacred

offices and privileges appertaining to the children of the promise. Now, *the first-born males were set aside for the service of God*, though they soon forfeited this high privilege in the wilderness, and their office was transferred to the Levites. In this point of view we should not expect the posterity of these retainers to be numbered among the *first-born*, nor in any way incorporated among the families of the *Levites*.

Thus we may fairly consider the total number of the *true* male Israelites of all ages to be reduced to somewhere about three hundred thousand. A difficulty yet remains ; how can 22,000 represent the number of the first-born as applying to the male population of the eleven tribes thus roughly estimated at about 300,000 ? There is, indeed, one hypothesis by which I can materially diminish the difficulty ; I can scarcely expect you to accept it, though to my own mind it does assume the aspect of a very considerable amount of probability. Believing as I do that the God of their fathers was aiding His people in their distress, believing that He had, in the touching language of the Sacred Narrative, “come down to help them,” is it a violent hypothesis for us to assume that their great Protector foresaw that in the wilderness all the adults of the Exodus would perish? Be this as it may, I do not insist upon the cause, but it is asserted in the Sacred Record that they came out of the desert about as numerous as they went in ; yet in the desert all who entered it above the age of 20 perished : I think, then, that, considering “the struggle for existence” would modify the marrying and the giving in marriage in the desert, it becomes a necessary hypothesis to suppose that the number of births for a few years before the Exodus greatly exceeded the average number before ; although this need

not upon the whole greatly affect the *average* result of the doubling of the population every fifteen years. Let us make, then, the not very violent hypothesis of 6 males to each family, as accruing in the last of the successions before the Exodus, and then the result will be in close accordance with the Scripture Narrative. For births at the rate of 6 males in a family imply one twenty-fourth part of the entire population as first-born males: now, I have estimated the entire population of *pure descent* at 638,976, and this divided by 24 gives us about 26,000 as the equivalent number of first-born males—a number not very discordant from that mentioned in the Sacred Record.

You will say this is all hypothesis. Truly, on such a vague question as, “given the number of a family at one period to what number will it have increased at another,” is indeed a vague, unlimited, indeterminate problem. You assert the Scripture numbers are deserving of no credit or reliance. You say they virtually imply that each father on an average had a family of 84 children (art. 93), and, therefore, that the Scripture numbers are impossible. Now I shall remove the force of your argument for *impossibility*, if on *any not violently improbable hypothesis* I can show that the Scriptural numbers are very possible. I would appeal then to any man of ordinary sense whether any of the hypotheses which I have assumed, or all together, are beyond even a moderate probability. For what are the grounds of my calculation? They are as follows:—

1st. That in the case of a new population like that of the Israelites the population doubled on the average every fifteen years.

2nd. That the descendants of the servants and retainers who came down into Egypt with the fathers,

would be reckoned as among the men fit to bear arms for the common defence, but not among the first-born or the Levites who were consecrated to the Lord.

3rd. That the circumstances under which the Israelites perished in the desert, indicate an unusually large increase of the families (12 to each) for a very few years immediately preceding the Exodus.

These not unreasonable hypotheses being made, it appears that the Sacred Record is wholly consistent both with itself and with probability :—

1st. In the *large* number which it assigns to the adult males fit to bear arms, 600,000.

2nd. In the comparatively small number of the first-born males.

3rd. In the comparatively small number of the Levites in general, 22,000 males of all ages ; being not a fourth part of the average numbers of the other tribes. Therefore I cannot but think that hypotheses which thus grasp and link together so many facts not mutually dependent *inter se*, bear the unquestionable stamp of truth. The stamp of truth, not alone as respects the hypotheses, but as respects the Sacred Record which thus bears so strict a cross-examination.

CHAPTER V.

THE PASSOVER.—THE EXODUS.—THE MARCH.—ISRAEL ARMED.—MOSES ADDRESSING ALL ISRAEL.—THE POLL-TAX AND THE CENSUS.—THE POPULATION OF PALESTINE.

I NOW proceed to consider a series of objections against the veracity of the narrative, which I think require far less elaborate replies : my observations will

consequently be, intentionally, brief, and all the more so, because the solutions of the difficulties you propound lie, with one exception, very much upon the surface of the events objected to.

You ask by way of objection, “How could the order to keep the Passover have been conveyed, with its minutest particulars, to each individual household of this vast community (as large as that of London) **IN TWELVE HOURS?**”

I reply that the Sacred Narrative implies a previous notice, *not of twelve hours*, but, at the least, *of five days*.

For, as I read it, the sequence of events in the Sacred Record is as follows:—(*Ex. xi. and xii.*)

1. The consternation among the Egyptians caused by the thick darkness.

2. The secret order, *λάλησον οὖν κρυφῆ εἰς τὰ ὡτα* (LXX), to borrow the jewels, and the promise that but one more plague, and then deliverance (*Ex. xi. 2*) ; also the successful nature of this operation. (*Ex. xi. 3.*)

3*. Moses threatens Pharaoh with the death of the first-born in the dead of night: but the king refuses to let the Israelites go. (*Ex. xi. 5.*)

4. The command to all the congregation to select a lamb on the ensuing tenth day of the month: *λαβέτωσαν ἐκαστος πρόβατον.* (LXX. *Ex. xii. 2.*)

5. To keep this lamb apart until the fourteenth day, and then to kill it at even; and on this evening to sprinkle the door-posts with the blood thereof. (*Ex. xii. 6-11.*)

6**. The intimation that “I will pass through the land of Egypt *this night:*” *ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ταύτῃ.* (LXX. *Ex. xii. 12.*)

9. *After these instructions* arrives the tenth day

of the month, and with it the command from Moses, “Draw out now, and take you a lamb according to your families;” or, as in LXX : ἀπελθόντες λάβετε ὑμῖν αὐτοῖς πρόβατον κατὰ συγγενείας. (LXX. Ex. xii. 21.)

10. The Passover is kept ; the first-born of the Egyptians perish : and the Israelites are thrust out in haste. (Ex. xii. 29.)

If this be the true account of the Scripture Record, then your objection on the score of the want of time, arising from but a twelve hours’ notice, is completely removed. You will observe that the ten paragraphs into which I have divided the narrative, *all lie in the order of the Sacred Narrative*, and I think that but two questions can arise regarding any of them. The first question respects 3*. It may possibly be that Ex. xi. 6-11, is a prolepsis, and that Moses did not in fact appear before Pharaoh until the fourteenth of the month : if so, περὶ μέσας νύκτας refers to *that* midnight, the midnight of the fourteenth ; if there be no prolepsis, then the words simply mean the depth or the dead of *some* night. Which of these two is meant by Moses cannot now be determined, and the distinction has nothing to do with our argument. It is more natural to suppose no prolepsis.

However, you lay great stress on the expression in 6**, “I will pass through the land of Egypt *this night*” (Ex. xii. 12). You consider that such words as “*this night*” imply that the speaker would only have used them on the very day of the night to which they actually refer, *i. e.* on the fourteenth day ; and on this ground you argue that but a *few hours’ notice* could have been given for the momentous and specially complicated preparations for the Passover. To this I reply, not so : for nine verses *onwards* we have Moses telling the children of Israel to *go and select* the lamb

in proportion to their families ; and this selection according to their families was to be made on the *tenth* day of the month. I should think this decides the question that the words, “I will pass through the land of Egypt this night,” were spoken not only before the fourteenth, but even before the tenth day of the month.

Still you will argue, “I will pass through the land of Egypt *this night*” cannot be the same, nor mean the same as “I will pass through the land of Egypt *that night*,” viz. on the fourteenth. To this I reply, that it is natural, nay unavoidable, for a speaker whose mind is full of various important events, all of which are to occur on a certain day yet future, to speak of *that* day as “*this* day :” *it is the day most present to the speaker's mind.*

I contend, therefore, that whether we regard the actual sequence of the words of the Sacred Record, or whether we regard the ordinary language adopted by a narrator, *at least five days' notice* were given for the preparation of the first Passover, and for the borrowing of the jewels of gold and the jewels of silver ; and that you have no solid ground for your assertion of a notice of but *twelve hours*, for both of these transactions.

THE EXODUS.

Again, regarding the exodus itself, you argue against the veracity of “the story,” because it implies impossibilities in the journey. 1. Because it was so extremely sudden. 2. Because it was impossible for women and children to have travelled on foot nearly sixty miles in the course of three successive days.

To this I reply, that the Exodus is represented to us as sudden in this respect only, that the precise mo-

ment of actual departure was indeed unknown : whereas, on the contrary, that the children of the promise were now on the very eve of quitting the land of their bondage, was the one engrossing theme, to the exclusion of all other themes, which had filled their thoughts and their hopes for weeks before. The frogs, and the lice, and the murrain, and the hail, and the thick darkness, all these terrible visitations spoke to them and to their oppressors but one language, "Let My people go that they may serve Me." Thrice was the permission to go extorted, thrice did they commence their preparations, and thrice to their mockery and bitter disappointment was the permission rescinded. What else then, in every household, could possibly form the very staple of their thoughts ? What else the burden of their daily talk, but that at length the God of their fathers had visited His people, and that the promised time of return to the land of their ancestors was fulfilled ? All this reminds us of how the absence of their Divine Friend was the one topic which filled the minds of the sisters mourning for Lazarus at Bethany. But all this, the unavoidable, the expectant attitude of the minds of the Israelites you ignore, and you represent the Exodus as every way sudden and wholly unexpected. (Chapter XI.) Sudden, indeed it was in its last catastrophe, but sudden only to men who were waiting with their lamps burning, their loins girded, and their staves in their hands, waiting for him who was coming by night.

Now, I say, considering this unavoidably expectant posture of the Israelites, is it conceivable

1. That they had made no preparation whatever for their three days' journey in the wilderness, no regulations as to how they should leave not a hoof behind ?

2. That their elders, who were in constant com-

munication with Moses, had arranged no place of rendezvous, where the various bodies of the travellers might meet, after leaving Rameses *and many other places* in its neighbourhood ?

3. That they who lent the people jewels of gold and jewels of silver for the women to wear at their great festival in the wilderness, would refuse to grant them the less costly, but more necessary, boon of carts to carry the women and their little ones ? Of the adult men alone is it said that they marched “on foot.”

You speak of your own confusion when aroused from your beds with the false alarm that “the Zulus are upon us.” (P. 61.) And, therefore, you say, from your own experience, the record of the Exodus is “utterly incredible and impossible.” (P. 61.) Pardon me for saying that, viewed in the light of the foregoing considerations, indicating conditions so wholly different from yours, I regard the Scripture Narrative as credible and natural.

THE MARCH.

But further, you proceed to state another objection as arising from the impossibility of so enormous a multitude as two millions of souls of all ages journeying on foot seventeen or twenty miles daily, for three successive days.

To this I reply, that, though difficult, it is conceivable that the adults might complete such a march, and it is said of the 600,000 adults alone that they journeyed *on foot*: I have hinted before there are reasons to suppose, and none from the record to exclude, the use of carts for the women and children, and assuredly there were multitudes of oxen to draw them.

But then I am not confined by the Sacred Record to the supposition of a journey of seventeen miles, on each

of three successive days, without rest or intermission. All that the Scripture Narrative, with its customary brevity, asserts is this. On the fourteenth day of the first month they left Rameses, 600,000 adult males on foot. I presume this implies that *the main body* left Rameses, *not excluding other bodies* from other quarters. Then that they marched to Succoth, the first convenient place, I presume, *of rendezvous*. It is nowhere said that they marched thither *in one day*. Then they encamped at Etham, then along the shore of the Red Sea, and by the fifteenth day of the second month they are between Elim and the wilderness of Sinai. (P. 33.) We have no manner of notion where these places of halting were; neither have we any dates in connection with the march, but two, viz. the fourteenth of the first month and the fifteenth of the second (*Ex. xvi.*); and it is wholly gratuitous, as it appears to me, for you to say the marches were impossible, when you know nothing for certain either of their length or of their duration.

I do not doubt that the difficulties of collecting, and moving, and feeding so vast a body of people were very formidable; but then I as little doubt that Moses and the Elders gave many instructions and issued many regulations. They certainly had ample time so to do. Moreover, unless the whole narrative is one impudent forgery, it is more than supposeable that He who commanded His people to go, would, when their natural powers failed, renew them as the eagles, and carry them out with “a high hand.”

THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL ARMED.

You devote a chapter (the ninth) to the difficulty which you say is involved in that part of the Sacred Record where it is written, “The children of Israel

went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt." (*Ex. xiii. 18.*)

You affirm that the very dubious word here translated "harnessed," *must* mean "armed," and then you ask (p. 51), how could these 600,000 men procure arms out of Egypt?

To this I reply :—

1. The comprehensive terms, "children of Israel," are general; and here, as elsewhere, as they cannot refer to the whole body of the Israelites, men, women, and children, so the language simply asserts that some considerable portion of the nation had arms in their hands. They did not go out disorderly, nor without arms.

2. There could be no insuperable difficulty in obtaining arms for a considerable portion of the adults. For where there is a will there is a way; and we must not forget the facilities which the Israelites would derive from the prostrate consternation into which the Egyptians were thrown by the sudden and universal death of their first-born males.

I think, moreover, we may fairly infer that the Israelites were not very abundantly supplied with arms at the time of the Exodus, from the fact that the reason assigned why they did not march directly by Pelusium to the land of the Philistines is, "Lest, per-adventure, the people repent when they see war, and they return into Egypt." (*Ex. xiii. 17.*) I apprehend these 600,000 men, had they been fully equipped with arms in their hands, would scarcely have declined battle with the Philistines; inasmuch as not a month afterwards they did fight with Amalek, and discomfited him in Rephidim;* the only notable altera-

* See a beautiful instance of undesigned coincidence, in Blunt's *Veracity of the Old Testament.*

tion in their circumstances being that, during the interval, they had procured arms driven ashore by the waves, from the Egyptians who had perished in the Red Sea.

But even at the first census (*Numb. i. 3*), I am by no means sure that the 600,000 adults were fully armed; the Septuagint says, not that they were *all armed*, but that they formed the host of Israel: πᾶς ὁ ἐκπορευόμενος ἐν δυνάμει Ἰσραὴλ. And it is unnecessary to say that America has taught us how it is by no means an unusual circumstance for a newly-raised army to be for a time very scantily provided with the weapons of war.

I pass over the other interpretations of the word translated “harnessed,” whether in LXX or elsewhere; though they would be of great service in helping us over the difficulty, if need there were of such assistance.

MOSES ADDRESSES ALL ISRAEL.

Another objection to the veracity of the narrative lies, you say, in the fact of Moses addressing not only these 600,000 adults, but the whole population of Israel. “These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel.” (*Deut. i. 1.*)

“And Moses called all Israel and said unto them.” (*Deut. v. i.*) “Surely, no human voice,” you say, “unless strengthened by a miracle, could have reached the ears of a crowded mass of people as large as the whole population of London.” (P. 37.)

And if this stentorian voice could have reached them all, I would ask, what would have become of the ears of those who were unfortunately near to the speaker?

And yet, notwithstanding your difficulty, I, at this moment, and while I write, meet with a somewhat parallel case. The Lord Mayor, I read, has just ad-

dressed the electors and non-electors of the town and county of Southampton. Did 10,000 men of Southampton all really drink in the eloquence of that sturdy voice? Or because this was impossible, is the Lord Mayor's address *a fable*?

But still more is told us regarding the voice of the great Hebrew legislator implying, (*if*, indeed, the words of the narrative are to be interpreted after your model,) miraculous activity and power of subduing the tones thereof. For Moses is thus commanded, as we have seen: λάλησον οὖν κρυφῆ εἰς τὰ ὄτα τοῦ λαοῦ, “*Speak secretly in the ears of the people;*” i.e. *whisper to* above two million souls!! (*Exod. xi. 2. LXX.*) Moreover, his power and activity of *hearing* (if interpreted after your model) must have been equally astounding with that of his voice; for thus I read: “*And Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man at the door of his tent.*” (*Numb. xi. 10.*) And this as applying to a population of above two million of souls! Truly this straining of the words of Scripture, words spoken so artlessly, so humanly, so unsuspectingly of all cavil, is fruitful in very dangerous results. Would you apply this method of interpretation to the last verse in St. John's Gospel? Or did St. Paul interpret after your model those words of his Divine Master recorded in St. Matt. v. 39?

But were these observations insufficient to remove the difficulty, we have the express words of Scripture itself, explaining the manner and the amount of the help which Moses received in his addresses and exhortations to *all Israel*. The Elders, the Priests, and the Levites assisted him. Deut. xxvii. 1, and 9; “*And Moses, with the Elders of Israel, commanded the people*” to keep the ordinances. “*And Moses, and the Priests, and the Levites, spake unto all Israel.*”

THE SIZE OF THE COURT OF THE TABERNACLE.

The objection which you allege in Chapter IV. against the dimensions of the Court of the Tabernacle, as being inadequate to the reception of the whole congregation of Israel, who were commanded to assemble therein on the occasion of the consecration of Aaron, is of a precisely similar character to the case just considered. It is, I think, the same in principle as if one were to object to the asserted number of the House of Commons, because her Majesty's faithful Commons are summoned by the highest authority among us, to assemble on various occasions below the bar of the House of Lords in a space insufficient to receive a third part of their numbers. It is the same in principle, as to object to the recorded number of the population of a county, on the score that the county hall is of dimensions inadequate to receive one-twentieth part of all the payers of county rates. You calculate with much care and precision that if the command of Moses were obeyed, *for the whole congregation of Israel* to assemble in the Court of the Tabernacle *before the door* of the Sanctuary, it would imply a length to the Court itself of 20 miles !! What if I amend your arithmetic? The *door* itself of the Tabernacle, which you say was 18 feet wide, possibly might not have occupied more than the half of its width, viz. 9 feet; consequently, if the order was (as you require it) to be carried out to the letter, we must have a column of Israelites, five men in front, (not 9, as you say,) and forty miles long!!! You *admit* a possible population of 5000: on this your reduced scale, the column of spectators must have reached 1000 feet!!! Surely all this is sufficient both to explain and to remove the difficulty. May I suggest

that on occasions of great crowds and of unusual solemnity, the curtains of the outer court may have been partially removed? But, after all, is the difficulty so great as to be worth the words and the print required for its statement and for its solution? I think not.

THE POLL TAX AND THE CENSUS.

We have not yet done with objections to the veracity of the Pentateuch drawn from the numbers assigned to the Hebrew population.

It appears from the Sacred Record (*Ex. xxviii.*) that, in order to provide for the silver furniture of the Tabernacle, every male of the age of twenty was ordered to pay a poll tax of half a shekel. The number of these half shekels involves the fact of there being 603,550 adult males of the age of twenty years and upwards. Sometime afterwards, the interval is not very precisely known, but it may have been three or four months, an order is issued to take the numbers of the children of Israel; and the result is that the number of the adult males of twenty years old and upwards again comes out precisely the same as before, viz. 603,550. (*Numb. i. 1-46.*)

"It is surprising," you say (p. 42), "that the number of the adult males should have been identically the same on the first occasion as it was half a year afterwards." So surprising, that you say, "Even Kurtz himself is obliged to give up the literal historical accuracy of both statements." (P. 43.)

Now here, certainly, is a tangled thread, but I am by no means disposed to give up in despair the unravelling thereof; and the clue, I think here, as in most of your other perplexities, (I say it with respect,) lies upon the surface. I cannot help thinking that the German mind, not seldom, through much learning envelopes itself in ponderous obscurity.

All who were twenty years old and upwards were to pay the poll tax (*Ex. xxviii. 26*) ; and again, all who were twenty years old and upwards were to be enrolled among the men fit to bear arms in the common defence. (*Numb. i. 3.*) But in all orders of a government relative to ages for enrolment, it is customary, nay, it is necessary, to assign an epoch, a particular date, for the common reference ; an “origin of co-ordinates,” as mathematicians are wont to call it. The order must be for all who shall be, or who were, twenty years old *on some particular day*. Now the poll tax would be paid but a few weeks (say twelve or fourteen) *before* the first day of the first month, when the Tabernacle (for which the fund was raised) was to be reared in the desert. And again, the census was to be taken just one month *after* this same most memorable event, and this most natural epoch, even the first day of the new year. Now is it a violent hypothesis to make, nay, rather, is it not a most natural regulation, that all who should be twenty years old on the approaching first day of the first month must pay the tax ; and all that were twenty years old on this same new year’s day but very recently past should be enrolled among the men able to bear arms ?

Even supposing the above is not the true solution of the difficulty (though I believe and contend that it is), still, as it is a possible and a natural solution, there is no ground left for any man whereon he may stand and argue for the incredibility, the sheer impossibility, of the Sacred Record.

But one word more on this subject. The interval between the poll tax and the enrolment I have taken at about four months ; and I have assumed that no death of an adult occurred in the interim ; and this need not surprise us, for if the narrative possess any

coherence, the death of an adult among the children of the promise, now on their way from the house of bondage to the good land of their inheritance, was not to be expected. I know not whether you allow this ground to be tenable or not: at all events the Sacred Record assumes it.*

THE POPULATION OF PALESTINE.

The last objection against the veracity of the Sacred Record, in connection with the number of the Hebrew population, is that which you very briefly but strongly urge in Chapter XIII.

In several passages in Deuteronomy it is said that the Israelites were to destroy “seven nations *greater* and *mightier*” than themselves.

To this you object that the land of Canaan *could not* have sustained a population of seventeen millions, for that, you consider, is the number implied.

Here I can fully appreciate the difficulty. But what if the difficulty be of your own creation? I turn to the Septuagint, and there I find in all the passages, without exception, where our English version reads, “seven nations *greater* and *mightier* than thou,” the Greek text runs, “seven nations, *great* ones and stronger than thou:” μέγαλα καὶ ἵσχυρότερα. *Great* they were, but *not each more populous* than Israel. Stronger they were, for some of them had chariots of iron and gates of brass, with cities perched upon the hills; and hard indeed would their capture have been had not the Lord fought for Israel. Still, there is a wide difference between *great* and *greater*; in one case there would be a difficulty in the narrative, in the other there is none at all.

* See a beautiful instance of “consistency without contrivance,” connected with the above subject of debate, in Blunt’s *Veracity of the Pentateuch*.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WARS AGAINST THE AMORITES AND MIDIANITES.
CONCLUSION.

YOU object to the historical value of the record of the military proceedings of the Hebrew people during the six months before the final address of Moses in the plains of Moab; because it represents, you say, operations impossible to be performed in the time which is assigned to them. (*Art. 174.*)

This question, I think, would, in most of its parts, be better discussed by military men than by clergymen. Giving, however, the closest attention I can to the subject, I confess myself unable to appreciate your difficulty: I think it exists solely in your own imagination. Besides, we shall see in the sequel you confess a motive, on what you consider *moral* grounds, for impugning the truth of the narrative.

The account you object to is that given in *Numb.* *xxi.*, and in those memorable chapters regarding Baalaam with which all Christian men have an unhappy familiarity: but in which a good and most able man, the modern ornament of our College, has discovered very convincing evidences of the truth* which you impugn. The narrative in question occupies a period of about six months, from the death of Aaron, on the first day of the fifth month, until the first day of the eleventh month, when Moses commenced his memorable address to the people in the plains of Moab. (*Deut. i. 3.*)

You commence your argument by reducing, on no

* See Blunt's *Coincidences*, in loco.

good grounds, these six months to five, assigning one month to total inactivity on the part of the Israelites : it was spent, you say, in mourning for Aaron. (*Art. 173, 1.*) But how can you say so, when we read that a certain king, Arad (*Numb. xxi. 1*), but little respecting their grief, made war upon Israel, and took some of them prisoners ? A battle ensues, ending with the defeat of himself, and the destruction of his cities. For these operations you assign two *months* ! Pardon me if, in ignorance equal to your own in such matters, I assign two *weeks*. Who shall decide ? You and I have no experience in military raids : and, especially, we have no knowledge of nomadic warfare. It therefore appears to me, that, for us to say of that or this military operation, in a country and under circumstances regarding which we are profoundly ignorant, that it must have occupied this time or that, borders on the presumptuous. We have now five months and more left for the march from Mount Hor, and the partial conquest of a country about 90 miles long by 25 broad, even from Arnon to Edrei, and from Jordan eastward towards the mountains of Moab,* together with one final battle against the wretched men of Midian : those “sinners above all the Galileans.” In my ignorance of military operations I should conceive this raid, in so comparatively small a district, would not be an inconceivable feat for 600,000 men in arms, as the sad work of five months, or even much less. At all events, our belligerent cousins across the Atlantic have, unhappily, done sadder and sharper work in a shorter time. I think, therefore, that yours is a difficulty existing in your own imagination, and that it exists there chiefly on account of

* See a most interesting description of this country in Dr. Stanley's *Palestine*.

a moral difficulty to which I shall soon allude, but in which few Englishmen will sympathize. I think, moreover, there would be no great difficulty in the case, even if we ignore those words of Moses, alleged to have been uttered by the God of the Israelites : “Behold, this day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations . . . who shall hear of thee.” (*Deut.* ii. 25.)

Your main difficulty, however, lies in the time required for Balak to send twice to Pethor in quest of Balaam. It is said that “Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done ($\epsilon \pi o i \eta \sigma \epsilon$) to the Amorites” (*Numb.* xxii. 2) ; and that, thereupon, he sent to Pethor for Balaam.

Now Sihon, king of the Amorites, may have fallen into very evil case at the hands of the men of Israel, within two months of the fight with Arad in the fifth month. Let us suppose, also, though an extravagant supposition, that the journey twice to Balaam (naturally made with inconvenient haste) occupied *three months*, perhaps ; this brings us to the *tenth* month only, and leaves us ample time for the transactions connected with Balaam’s prophecies, and for the retribution on those miserable men, the Midianites.

Now I would fain appeal to any impartial man whether you have any good ground for saying, with reference to these matters, “How thankful we must be, that we are *no longer obliged to believe the story.*” The “story” you allude to is contained in *Numb.* xxxi., and it refers to the retribution on the men and women of Midian. You called it a story “*in comparison with which the tragedy of Cawnpore sinks into nothing.*” (P. 141.) Alas, indeed ! for the comparison thus suggested to the mind of an English Bishop. Have you forgotten what the men of Midian did ? Have you forgotten what the women of Midian were ?



Have you forgotten the diabolical seduction whereby the men and women of Midian, at the advice of Balaam, entrapped Israel into sin, that so Israel's righteous God might punish the sinner ? Do you, Dr. Colenso, mean to say that the massacre of those noble English ladies at Cawnpore *sinks into nothing* in atrocity compared with the righteous judgment on the harlots of Midian ? Alas ! that an English Bishop should have drawn such a comparison. Pardon me for saying that it seems as if the power of mere numbers had overwhelmed you in many of your arguments. I, for one, would weigh the life of a single chaste, undaunted, Christian lady, to say nothing of an English lady, murdered by demons at Cawnpore, against a whole nation of the prostitutes of Midian.

“ FOR THEIR WICKEDNESS I drove them out.”

I have thus completed the task which I set myself of examining the validity of your arguments against the veracity of the Pentateuch. It has been an anxious, but I am persuaded, a successful labour of love ; and even if anywhere I have failed to discover the flaw in your reasoning, other men, in due time, will supply the deficiency. For I cannot for one moment doubt that the books of Moses, quoted so frequently and so solemnly by Him who is the Truth, must in the main, and in every essential particular, themselves be historically true. In more than one instance, the Divine Founder of our faith, who is in the bosom of the Father, cites these books as stamped with the authority of God. Terrible, therefore, would be the shock to the Christian mind, if you could maintain your assertion that the books thus cited, detail, not in one place, but in fifty places,

a “story” incredible, impossible, historically false. But it is not so ; on the contrary, if any man shall, in an humble spirit, scrutinize the Sacred Record, word by word, seeking, as I trust I have done, for nothing so much as for the truth, he will find, as his exceeding great reward, new and sacred lights illuminating the page, and unexpected flashes of truth evolving themselves to cheer and reassure him.

NOTES.

Note on certain “ Undesigned Coincidences ” which have occurred to the author during perusals of the Pentateuch for the purposes of the arguments in this book.

I.

IT is written in *Ex. vi. 23*, “ And Aaron took him Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab, sister of Naashon to wife.” Naashon probably being mentioned because he was chief captain of the hosts of Judah in the desert. And here perhaps the matter has rested without further notice until the present day. Yet upon examination it contains an unexpected fact, and one by no means easy to account for. For Elisheba was in the *seventh* descent or generation from Jacob, and Aaron was only in the *fourth*. Here, then, we have an extraordinary circumstance, as if a man were to marry his cousin’s great-granddaughter. Can we explain or account for this? I think we can; but the explanation is not on the surface, it lies imbedded among the lower strata of the narrative.

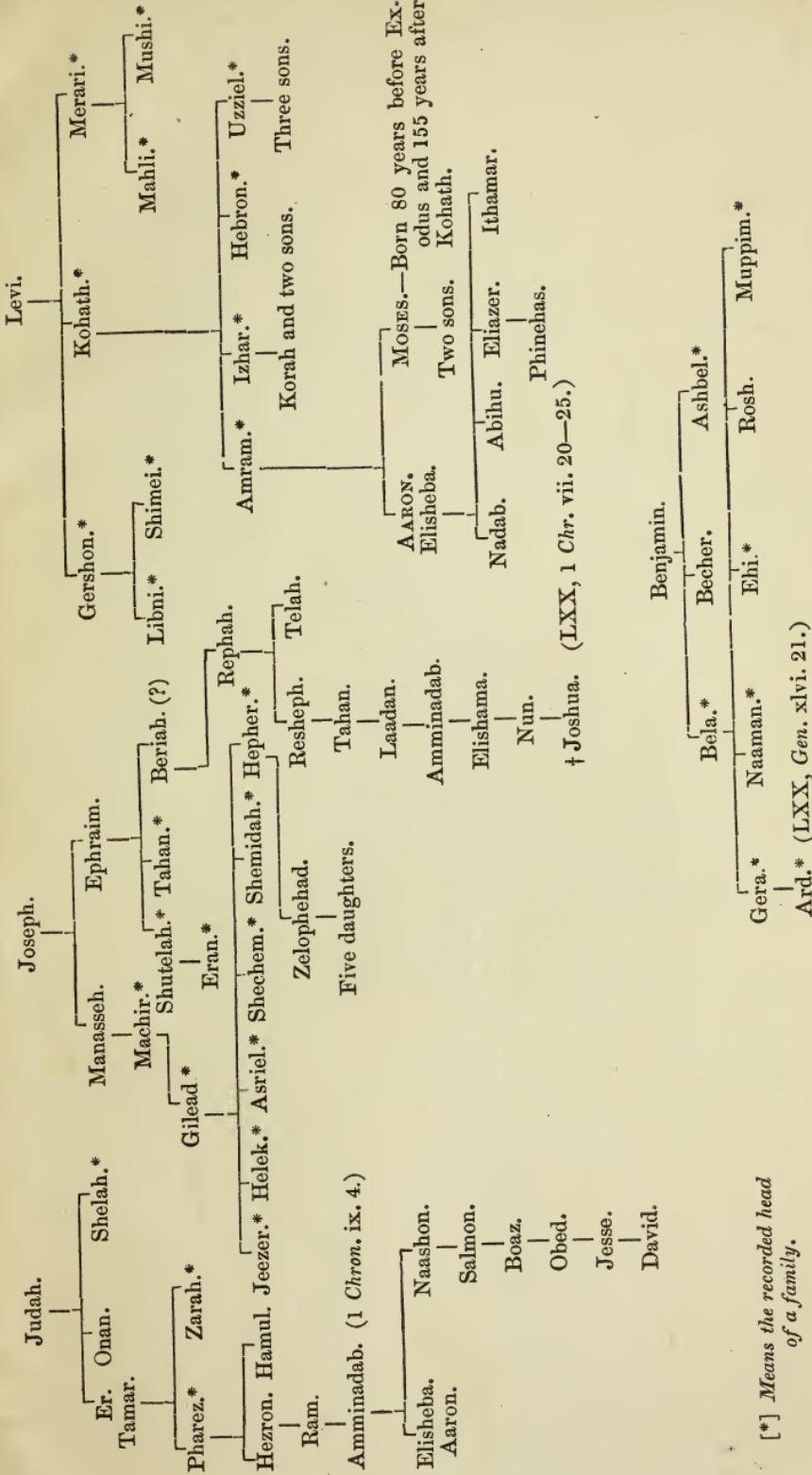
Aaron, we learn, was 83 years of age at the time of the Exodus. Now the time that the children of the promise sojourned in Egypt was 215 years, consequently 132 years had elapsed between Aaron’s birth and the time that his grandfather Kohath came into the land of Egypt. Kohath when he came thither must have been at least 20 years of age, consequently, in this particular family of Aaron and Moses we have the lapse of, at least, 152 years between the birth of Kohath and the birth of his grandson Aaron. Now this is a very unusual circumstance; we should have expected a lapse of about 60 years; it indicates that, from some cause and for some reason unknown, three generations had been lost in the family of Aaron; that is, Aaron belongs, in fact, to the fourth generation from Jacob, while other persons of his own age might very naturally have belonged to the seventh. It is, therefore, quite possible, nay natural, that Aaron should

marry a wife who belonged to three generations in advance of himself.

Now, as I believe, we have here a remarkable internal evidence of the truth of the narrative, we have marks of consistency without contrivance. For it is inconceivable that a forger should have contrived a fictitious marriage between Aaron and Elisheba, merely with the expectation that some day or other some curious person would be struck by the apparent discrepancy of their ages, itself a circumstance by no means on the surface, and then at length ferret out the consistency of the narrative after all.

II.

IN *Numbers i. 2*, I read that, by the Divine command, Moses was to number the people who had come out of Egypt. The numbering was completed with great precision and solemnity. Now the order in which the tribes were numbered is as follows:—Reuben, Simeon, Gad, and then follow Judah, Issachar, &c. That Reuben should take the precedence, and be the first tribe to be numbered, is quite natural, for Reuben was the first-born of Jacob's sons; Simeon also was the second born, consequently we might suppose that the order of the numbering was the same as the order of seniority; but it is not so, for Gad, who was the third to be numbered, was the seventh only in the order of birth. Have we anything in the record to explain this, or was it an accidental circumstance having no meaning in itself? I think we have. On the same occasion as the numbering of the people, an arrangement had been made for the order in which the tribes were to encamp round the Tabernacle; I find here that Judah was to occupy the post of honour, *i.e.* the east side, and the first to march on to battle, and with him were associated Issachar and Zebulun; but next in order, and on the north side, were to encamp Reuben, Simeon, and Gad. Now that this circumstance is brought to our notice, we see at once that nothing could be more natural or more convenient, than that the order of numbering the tribes should also be the same as the order in which the tribes encamped. And yet no doubt these facts have been read thousands of times without the latent marks of consistency and truth being observed by any reader.



[*] Means the recorded head
of a family.

† Regarding the difficulty (Art. 113) in the genealogy of Joshua, see Biblical Dictionary, Arts. Becher and Beriah. Bishop Colenso's observations, (Art. 113, i.) does not apply: see LXX, 1 Chr. ix. 43, and viii. 37, observing the *κύριον της οἰκου* in the latter.

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